

244.
THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE AND CROWN.

A
S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

The Rev. JOHN BERRIDGE,

Who departed this LIFE, Jan. 3, 1793:

PREACHED AT

BARTHOLOMEW CHAPEL, *Bartholomew Close.*

On SUNDAY EVENING, *February 3, 1793.*

By the Rev. W. HOLLAND, *K*

Minister of that CHAPEL, and Master of the ACADEMY there.

Published at request.

TAKEN IN SHORT HAND, By JOB SIBLEY.

L O N D O N.

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2 TIM. iv. 7, 8.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, &c.

WERE I to search through the whole of the inspired volume, I do not think I should meet with words that would better speak the last ideas of him whose departure we are now to improve, than those of my text.

The words of the wise and great, are at all times attended to with respect; but especially are we attentive to the language of their last moments, and we pay a peculiar degree of regard to what falls from their lips in the solemn and important hour of dissolution. The words of our text afford some account of the last feelings of one whose character and conduct were eminently and truly great—In the character and conduct of the apostle, as it appeared before and after his conversion, we are presented with a memorable instance of the riches and the power of redeeming grace. Once wrapt up in the pharisaical garment of his own righteousness, he

thought himself as touching the law blameless, and proved his zeal by persecuting the saints: whilst thus engaged the hand of redeeming grace arrested him in his mad career, the spirit of God spoke conviction to his soul, and we behold him no more a persecutor, but a zealous preacher and defender of the gospel as it is in Christ. No sooner had divine grace laid hold upon his heart, than he began to give evident proofs of the change that grace had wrought—denying himself, he took up his cross, and through good report and evil report, in the paths of danger and the way to death, he follows the steps of his great Redeemer, saying, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.” *Phil.* iii. 8, 9, 10.

The words before us, are part of an epistle to Timothy, written after the Apostle had
been

been informed by the spirit that the time of his departure was at hand, and that he was about to be offered up in that cause he had so long and so nobly defended—About to quit the busy stage of action, he looks back on the scenes he had past, and exclaims, “ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, &c.”

In the words of our text, two things present themselves for our attention :

First, What those things were, the apostle remembered with so much pleasure ?

Second, What it was he looked forward to, with delightful expectation ?

To these two things we shall pay some attention, and may the spirit of God render them profitable to our souls.

First, We enquire what those things were which the apostle apparently recollects with so much pleasure ?

“ I have fought a good fight.” Whatever opinion some may have formed respecting the life of a christian, we find from the word of God that it is by no means a state of ease, indolence or inactivity; it calls for constant watchfulness, unceasing diligence, and continued exertions made in the strength of Christ Jesus. The author of my text well knew that the christian soldier had many enemies to encounter, and many fatigues to bear, and therefore

he exhorts Timothy, "Endure hardship as a good foldier."

The followers of Christ have ever like their master, been despised, persecuted, hated, and rejected of men; but blessed be a covenant God in Christ Jesus, faith in his name has been and ever shall be their support, bringing them through and making them at last more than conquerors over all. "I will leave in the midst of thee a poor and an afflicted people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." *Zeph. iii. 12*. Having therefore such a support, the apostle exhorts to fight the good fight of faith, to stand in the evil day, and to hold fast our confidence to the end.

Amongst the numerous foes the christian has to encounter, we may name as the chief and principal ones, Satan, the world, and his own heart, each of which affords him sufficient cause for watchfulness and prayer, that he be not surprised or wounded by them.

SATAN, this is one and indeed the leader amongst the enemies of the christian, and he is one whose bitter hatred of Christ, and whose numerous devices to harass the followers of Christ, the christian cannot be ignorant of—What multiplied artifices and various machinations does the devil make use of to distress the christian!—How will he at one time, endeavour to lull the soul into pre-
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presumption or carnal security? at another, how will he endeavour to fill it with trouble, terror and dismay? how many hard thoughts of God and his dealings will he suggest to the mind? how many God dishonouring projects does he labour to put into our heads? and we have too much reason to complain of his success. Now, if the child of God would wish to enjoy much of his Father's presence, much nearness to and communion with God, he must be much in combat with this enemy. And here for his encouragement, the christian may remember the devil is already a conquered foe, his dear Redeemer has obtained a victory over him in the day when he spoiled principalities and powers triumphing over them. *Col. ii. 15.*

Of this the christian may rest assured, Satan is at best but a cowardly foe, like the dog that yelps at the heels of the passenger; if the man does but turn, immediately he flies: so if the christian does but begin in the strength of Christ to combat his foe, he shall soon put him to flight, *James iv. vii.*

The WORLD is another enemy with which the christian has also to engage, and this is an enemy that finds him not a little to do:—The men of the world they fight against the children

children of God, and prove by their opposition the native enmity of their hearts—While a man is in a state of nature, the world will not disturb him; for like, will love its like—but no sooner is a man made to feel the regenerating influences of the spirit of God, no sooner is he brought to set his face Zionwards, than immediately the world begins to take up arms against him. How often do Christ's dear soldiers find this hatred and opposition, rise up even amongst those who after the flesh are near and dear to them—The men of the world hate holiness in all its appearances, and being under the government of that carnal mind, which is enmity against God, they will persecute and distress his people wherever they find them. So also the christian has to fight with the delusions and temptations of the world, which the great enemy of souls is constantly laying in his way as snares for his feet—After these vanities, delusive as they are, the christian too often finds his affections going forth, and he has reason to cry with David, "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times." *Psalms* cxix. 20.

Now, in order to our walking honourably and comfortably in Christ's way, we must be
daily

daily fighting with the world by faith on Christ; having our eye to him directed, and our prayer to him poured out, that he would be pleased not to take us out of the world, but keep us from its evil.

As the last, but not the least enemy the christian has to encounter, we name his own HEART—against this enemy it becomes us to be ever upon our guard; for, saith Jeremiah, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?”

One particular excellency in the ministry of our departed friend was, that he frequently and ably opened the corruption and depravity of the human heart, and as often summoned the christian to his watch tower against self.

A warfare with the inward lusts and corruptions of our own hearts, is what we ought ever to maintain and carry on with vigour; assuring ourselves of this, that we are never more in danger, than when we think well of, or trust to, our own hearts.

“I have fought the good fight,” saith the apostle; that is, I have Christ strengthening me, maintained a warfare, a spiritual combat with the lusts and corruptions of my own heart. This is a warfare in which every chri-

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stian is more or less engaged; and it is described at large by the apostle in the 7th. chapter of Romans from verse 18, to the end of the chapter. From hence then it appears, that no sooner does a man enlist under the banner of King Jesus, than he immediately becomes a fighting man.—Now, Sirs, shall I ask, is this the case with us? Are we engaged in this warfare, or are we at peace with our enemies and in league with them? Are we seeking strength from Christ to resist the temptations of the enemy? or are we admitting him and his laws to bear rule in our hearts? Are we combating the world, its delusions and temptations, taking up our cross and following Christ? Or, are we yielding to the temptations, adopting the customs, and seeking the things of this world?—Do we find any thing of this spiritual warfare carrying on within our bosoms? This will be the case where a regenerating influence has taken place, for in that soul the flesh will lust against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove yourselves. “Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.” 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

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“*The good fight.*” The apostle here gives a character to the contest in which the christian is engaged, his fight is a good fight.

“It is a good cause.” The christian fights not his own battles, but the battles of the Lord; and blessed be his name, the Lord has promised to be with him. We often say, respecting men, that they will soon be put to flight, because they are engaged in a bad cause, and that puts fear into their hearts.—Now the christian is fighting in a good cause, and this makes him bold in the face of all his enemies. Solomon tells us “The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion,” *Prov. xxviii. 1.*

Union to Christ opens a man's eyes to see the excellency of the gospel fight, and gives him all boldness therein, as we see in the case of Peter and John; “Now when they, (the rulers) saw the boldness of Peter and John, and saw they were unlearned men, they marvelled and took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Are you and I soldiers of Christ, led out by our union with him? God enable us to prove it, so to be by our boldness—“the people that do know their God, shall be strong and do great exploits.” *Dan. xi. 32.*

“ We have good arms and armour.” This also makes the christian contest to be a good fight; we have these largely described by the apostle in his epistle to the *Ephesians* vi. 11.

“ Put on, saith the apostle, the whole armour of God,” a part of it will not do; we must have the whole, and not only have it, but put it on.” It is only a whole Christ apprehended by faith, that will enable the christian to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand—remember it is the whole armour of God, Christ unmixed with any thing else—it is not a linsley woolsey garment, part Christ and part self, that will do; it must be Christ alone and altogether, for in him shall the seed of Israel be justified, and surely his people shall say, “ in the Lord Jehoväh, we have righteousness and strength.”

Our loins are to be girt about with truth, the truth as it is in Jesus; this only can set the soul free and enable it to the spiritual warfare. The breast-plate of righteousness is another part of the christian armour, and without this we can do nothing: no soul can maintain the spiritual warfare that is not stripped of self, and only desires to have on him and before him, nothing but Christ and his righteousness; nor must we forget that glorious shield,
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the shield of faith, with which we are wonderfully enabled to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. Blessed be our God, there are thousands now in glory, and there are thousands now on earth, that have felt and witnessed the glorious utility of this shield. If you would know what faith can do for the christian, read over the 11th. Chapter of the *Hebrews*, and you will there see what wonders have been wrought by the exercises of faith in the soul.

The helmet of salvation also must not be forgotten, this is at once an ornament and a defence of the christian soldier, when by faith he is enabled to put it on.

Once more we may add, the christian has for his strengthening and defence the weapons of all prayer, and this is a powerful weapon indeed; it has made hell tremble even to its foundation—Oh, my christian friends, be much in the use of this weapon, you cannot conceive its utility; with it, Daniel stopped the lions mouths, and it brought down an angel to let Peter out of prison.—You never alarm the devil more than when you take up the shield of faith and the weapons of all-prayer—Surely then, christian, thou wilt not neglect these weapons! God

grant that we may be found in the use of them, more and more.

“ *A good captain.*” A good captain also makes the christian contest a good fight—Oh! how does it animate soldiers to have a good general lead them out to the battle. Now this the christian has, for saith Solomon, “ the Lord himself is with us for a captain.” 2 Chron. xiii. 12. Blessed be the great captain of salvation, he animates his soldiers by his presence, going before them in the way: “ The breaker is gone up before them, they have broken up and have passed through the gate and are gone out by it; their king shall pass before them, and the Lord at the head of them.” Micha ii. 13.

“ *I have finished my course.*” Here you and I are to learn that the christian’s way is a course marked out, and his work is an allotment given him by his master—The apostle here perhaps alluded to a particular species of exercise known in his day among the contenders in Olympic games, where a certain prize was contested by running in a certain course, bounded and marked out: Those who contested in this exercise were under an obligation to keep within certain bounds; so has the christian a way in which he must keep, if he

he will obtain the crown. "I, faith Christ, am the way, the truth, and the life." Those who run in the course, gave in their names to a certain officer ; so does the christian give up himself, and subscribe his name to the God of Jacob : Those who ran, frequently anointed themselves with oil : so the christian runs his race, making constant applications to Christ for fresh supplies of grace to enable him to hold on and to hold out to the end. We read in some prophane writers, of a race in which one of the competitors threw out certain toys, which the other stopping to pick up, lost the race.—Now, is not this the way the devil does by the christian racers? he does not care what you and I pursue, if we do not pursue Christ. May God enable you and I to lay aside every weight, and to press forward in our christian course.

I have kept the faith. This, as the apostle had said, is what has enabled me to hold on hitherto—I have been kept up only by faith, upon a precious and invaluable Redeemer.—Faith on Christ, christian, is that alone which can support thy soul ;—be concerned then to look much to Christ, keep close to Christ and be daily drawing supplies
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from Christ, out of whose fulness his people receive, and grace for grace:—There is nothing you and I ought to dread more than unbelief. “All things, saith our Lord, are possible to him that believeth;” and this the devil well knows, and therefore he wishes for nothing more than if possible to shake our faith.—Labour much then, my fellow christian, to lay hold of and keep Christ with you by faith, let faith’s eye be directed to the Redeemer in every trying time, ever remembering those exceeding great and precious promises that are yea, and amen, in him; “For faithful is he who hath called you, he will do it.” *1 Thes. v 24.* And further, saith the apostle, “Of this one thing I am confident, that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Christ, *Phil. i. 4.* This may suffice as to the first part of our subject, what those things were which the apostle recollected with pleasure, and we now pass on to consider

Secondly, Those things to which he looked forward with delightful expectation. “And now there is laid up for me a crown of glory which God the righteous Judge, shall give me; and not me only, but all those who love his appearing.”

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The apostle here looks forward to the day when God's suffering people should become crowned kings. St. John describes the song of the redeemed to be, "Now unto him who hath loved us, and washed us from sin in his blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God." *Rev*, i. 5.

"*A Crown.*" This implies exaltation and grandeur, and lifts up the thoughts to that state of glorious grandeur to which the christian shall be e'er long exalted. Here he is a man of sufferings and sorrows, here his estate is a mean and despised one; but then, his sorrows shall have an end and he shall be exalted to a throne.—"Now, says the apostle, it does not appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when Christ who is our head, shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."—There were doubtless many who thought the station of Dives superior far to that of Lazarus, but view the sequel: the poor man died and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man died, and in hell he lift up his eyes in torment. My fellow christians, let the thoughts of this exaltation that await you, support your souls; for saith your master, "Where I am ye shall be also."

Possessions also are annexed to a crown, and the nature of the christian's possessions are held up by a crown of righteousness : David had a believing view of those possessions when he said " In thy presence there is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore;" and to these, Paul looked forward when he said, " I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

" *A crown of righteousness.*" It only can be had and obtained by those who by the spirit of God, are made partakers of the righteousness of Christ Jesus.—The man who is brought to wear this crown in heaven's exalted state, must first have been brought to seek it with humility at mercy's door. Is this our case? are we possessors of this righteousness?—other portions may do for time; but only this will do for eternity. Have you been brought to see the nothingness of your own, and the excellency of Christ's righteousness, and say with the apostle, " I desire to win Christ and to be found in him?" Happy the man, happy the woman who is thus brought to hunger and thirst after righteousness; for, saith Christ, " such shall be filled, they

they shall be filled with grace in time, and possess the fulness of glory in eternity."

"Which God the righteous judge shall give me." Observe here, how close the apostle keeps to the doctrines he had constantly inculcated; he looks for his reward, not as of debt, but of grace. After his former enumeration of fighting, the fight finishes the course, and keeping the faith, we do not see any thing that looks like a claim—he owns the whole to be the free, unmerited gift of God: Paul was not ashamed to own himself a debtor for all he had and all he hoped: "I am (as if he had said altogether) an unprofitable servant, I have deserved nothing at the hands of my God, but condemnation; and if I receive this crown, I look for and expect it only as coming through the blood of Christ, I await it as that inheritance his grace has made sure to his people." Such as this, is the language of every new born soul, each will say, unto me, "Not unto me, but to the free grace of Christ be all the honour and glory."

It is such a view of salvation as this that renders Christ precious to the believing soul; because he brings all his blessings without money and without price. With what pleasure have some of us heard our departed friend

treat upon the excellency of a free grace salvation, whilst his honest heart glowed with strong affection to that precious Redeemer, who when his chosen people had nothing to pay, frankly forgave them all.

“*At that Day.*” What day? the day when our dear Emanuel shall come in the glory of his Father and of his holy angels—The day when he will come to pour out his vengeance upon his enemies, when he will gloriously own his despised followers, when he shall come to be admired by his saints, and glorified in all them that believe. Oh! my fellow immortals, what an awful day will that be to sinners! when the judge shall say, “Bring out these men that would not have me to reign over them, and bind them before me, and cast them into outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.” But on the other hand, what a joyful day will this be to the christian when his dear Lord shall come to put the crown upon his head and publicly acknowledge him for his own!—Rejoice, christian, the day is fast approaching; the day that shall end thy sufferings and commence thy triumph---the vision is but for an appointed time, wait for it.

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“*And not to me only.*” How careful was the apostle to check each rising fear that might possess the breasts of the weaker ones among God’s dear children—Some might have said, Yes, to an apostle, to such a one as Paul, this may be given; but as to me, how will it stand? shall I have a crown? I am but a poor trembling one, I have many doubts, many fears, many sorrows, and shall this be my lot also? is there indeed a crown for me? “Oh yes, says the apostle, even for thee, for the poorest, weakest, meanest of Christ’s followers, each shall have a portion in his crown of righteousness; it is to all that love his appearing, all who have their hearts affectioned to him.” What sayest thou now, trembling soul, methinks I hear thee say, “Though I have had many fears, many wanderings, many doubts; yet I trust I do love Christ, I trust he is in some measure precious to me, and there are seasons when I do seem to feel some faint longings after him. “Cheer up then, says St. Paul, be of good courage; there is a crown for thee, a crown of righteousness which God the righteous Judge will give thee.”

Well, sinner, and what dost thou think of fighting the good fight? what dost thou think
of

of enlisting under Christ's banner? remember there is no other way to wear the crown, you are either fighting under Christ, or you are fighting against Christ; on which side then are you? examine yourselves.—My dear fellow immortals, may God open your eyes, make you sharers in his grace, bring you to fight the good fight in time, and wear the crown in eternity.

And now, christian, a word to thee, thou art the inheritor of a crown, be careful to remember the grace that made the inheritance thine—think much on thy dear Redeemer, live much upon him by faith, cleave close to him, and in all thy trials remember the crown that awaits thee, which God the righteous judge shall give—the language is positive, may God enable you and me to live upon it to our comfort.

It will be probably expected, before I close, that I should say somewhat respecting our honoured friend, the late Rev. John Beridge, one of whom it might be truly said he was a bright and shining light: In the earliest part of his life he received serious impressions, and at an age when other boys are pursuing their accustomed amusements, he would frequently call his associates together
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to the reading of God's word and prayer—his father had originally designed him for an agricultural life; but his early seriousness and attachment to study induced him to alter his determination, and send him to the university—his father at this time an unconverted man made, respecting his son an observation which was afterwards literally fulfilled: being asked by a friend what was become of his son, he answered, “I have sent him to the university, that he may be a light to lighten the gentiles.” a prediction that has been verified to the joy of many. His regularity and seriousness at the university gained him the friendship of some, the enmity of many—at this time and for some years after, his views were not quite clear as to a free grace salvation, as it excludes every title of human ability.—His assiduity upon the spot to him allotted, and its surrounding neighbourhood, soon drew upon him the enmity of those, who like the drones, eat the honey, whilst they forbear the labor of the hive; and their resentment ended in an application to the bishop, before whom Mr Berridge was cited, and with such noble honesty did he defend his conduct, that his lordship treated him with respect, and dismissed him with honour.

One thing must not be omitted, whilst with the bishop, Mr Berridge observed, that he thought preaching on a week day in a barn, a less crime than attending a cock fight at an ale-house, a practice which he informed his Lordship was common amongst his accusers.—He laboured for many years with earnestness, though not with utility, which much discouraged him; he made it matter of earnest prayer to God, the Lord was pleased to open his eyes, he saw he had rested too much on human power, “*By grace ye are saved,*” was imprest upon his mind: he went to the pulpit, and with honest simplicity told the people he had hitherto deceived both them and himself; but God assisting him, he would do so no longer, and immediately he commenced amongst them that strain of preaching for which he was so long and so justly admired; and I would here only add, that under the above discourse, he received several valuable seals to his ministry.

I cannot forbear saying something here, as to the manner of his preaching; though a man whose abilities would have appeared to advantage in the most refined auditories, he chose rather to render himself useful to the more inferior ranks of men—Though in
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celled by none, and in literary accomplishments equalled by few: his humility, perhaps has not been paralleled by any.

This can be testified by the neighbourhood in which he dwelt, where his kindness and condescension ever to the meanest situation and the weakest capacity, will ever be remembered with gratitude and pleasure—With respect to his natural temper, perhaps, but few excelled or even equalled him in the management of it, and the constantly preserving that pleasing sweetness which rendered him universally agreeable to all who knew him—As an instance of this kind suffer me to mention the following anecdote; going once to attend a visitation, he was joined by a stranger, who was also a clergyman: after some conversation the stranger asked Mr. B. if he knew one Berridge in those parts, of whom he had heard was a very troublesome good for nothing fellow? “Yes, rejoined Mr. B. I know him, and do assure you that whatever you may have heard, one half of his wickedness has not been told you.” The stranger expressed his surprize, and requested Mr. B, to point out the man to him, when they arrived at the church, which he promised to do; and the conversation took a more general turn. On
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their arrival, the stranger reminded him of his promise. "My dear sir, said he, I am John Berridge." "Is it possible! said the astonished stranger, and can you forgive me? will you honour me with your acquaintance? will you admit me to your house?" "Yes, said the good old man, and to my heart.—He had been for some years past in the constant habit of preaching twice every day, except sabbath day either in his own church or in some neighbouring place licenced and supported entirely at his own expence—He was in an especial manner favoured with nearness to and communion with his God, as the following fact I can give from good authority, will fully testify—A friend, who paid him a visit after his sight was very much impaired, asked if now he was deprived of his books, he did not find his hours rather gloomy? No, said he, blessed be my God, I can yet read a little though but a little; when I rise in the morning, I go to my Master and tell him what I shall want for the day: I then read as long as I can; and afterwards I talk to my Master the rest of the morning, and then my master talks to me the rest of the day, and how should I be gloomy?

Of his reception with the christian world I need say nothing, it was spoke more loudly
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by the numerous congregations that at all times crouded round him and hung upon his words with pleasure.

On Tuesday, the day of his death, in the afternoon, he was struck with the loss of part of his bodily members, and almost with the loss of speech.

A friend who was with him said, " Sir you have fought the good fight, you have finished your course." " Yes, said he, blessed be his name." " Ere long, said his friend, you shall go up on high," " *Higher, Higher,* said he, and he fell asleep in Jesus.

May we not say, Behold the perfect man, and mark the upright, for the end of that man is peace.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory henceforth for ever, *Amen.*

F I N I S.

To LADY MARGARET INGHAM.

Madam,

On Thursday last I received a bill value £15, conveyed by the Rev. Mr Romaine, but presented by your Ladyship—It is now converted into cloaths, for the use of lay preachers, for which donation I send you my hearty thanks—the Lord has promised to return it an hundred fold into your bosom, I believe you can trust him.—I wish you had sent with your bill a few minutes of your life of faith, you might have instructed me while you are cloathing others; for indeed, I am one of those strange folks who set up for journey-men, without knowing their master's business; and offer many precious wares to sale, without understanding their full value—I have got to market for a most extraordinary person, whom I am supposed to be well acquainted with, because he employs me as a riding pedler to serve near forty shops in the country, besides my own Parish; yet I know much best of my master than I do of his

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his wares; often is my tongue describing him as the fairest of men, while my heart is painting him as the witch of Endor; and many big words have I spoke to his credit, yea, I am frequently beseeching people to trust him with their all, while my heart has been afraid to trust him with a groat—neither, madam, is this all, for such a profound ignoramous am I, that I know nothing of myself as I ought to know, having frequently mistaken rank pride for deep humility, and the work of self love for the love of Jesus. When my master first hired me into his service, he kept a brave table, and was wondrous free of his liquors—scarce a day past without roast meat and claret; then my heart said, Oh! I loved Jesus! and was ready to boast of it too; but at length he ordered his table to be spread with only bread from above, and water out of the rock; this my saucy stomach could not brook, my heart thought it prisoners fare, and my tongue called it light food; now my love for Jesus disappeared, I found I had only been following him for his loaves and fishes, and that like a true Parasite, I loved his cellar and his larder better than his person: Presently after, my master caught me in a very dirty trick which discovered the high pride

and amazing impudence of my heart—hitherto I had been kept a stranger to the livery my master gives his servants, only I knew he had many rarities such as diamonds and pearls in plenty, to dispose of. Accordingly I had begged of him a necklace an earring a nose-bob and many other pretty things which he readily parted with, being of a very generous and noble nature; and will it not surprise you to hear that I had the vanity to fix these ornaments on my own filthy rags, intending thereby to make a brave suit to appear in at court—well to be sure!

One day as I was busy mending my rags and putting on my pearls, in comes my master and giving me a sudden gripe that went to my heart, he said in an angry tone, “Varlet, follow me”—I arose and followed trembling, whilst he had me to the house of correction, where having set my feet in the stocks and stripped me of my ornaments, he then took up his nine-tail rod and laid upon me stoutly—I roared for mercy; but he declared he should not lay his rod aside till he had scourged every rag off my back, and indeed he was as good as his word; then think how confounded I must be to stand before him naked, especially now when I first saw myself a
Zip-

Zipporah in a Ethiopian skin, which the rags
 had concealed before from me : for a while
 I kept on my legs, yet being filled with shame,
 fell at length (being almost choaked with
 the dust and stench that came out in beating
 off the rags) at my master's feet, immediately
 the rod dropt from his hand, his countenance
 softened, and with a sweet voice bid me look
 up—I did so, and got a fresh sight of his prin-
 cely robe, the garment of salvation. O
 madam, it was a lovely sight, a charming
 robe reaching from his shoulders down to the
 feet, well adapted for covering and defence,
 yet excellent for beauty too—"Here prodigal
 Jack, he said with a smile, put this robe on
 thy back and then thou mayst come to court
 and shame an angel, it was wrought with my
 own hand and dyed with my blood—wear
 it, and remember me." I thanked him, and
 bowed and must tell you, madam, tho (I
 don't ask you to be a confidant) when my
 master opened his robe he gave me a hearty
 glance of his person, it was so divinely sweet
 and glorious, and withall so condescendingly
 humane, that I fell in love with him: and now
 would you think it of me, an old fool, as I
 am, near 50 Years of age, and as swarthy as
 a negro, nothing would content me but a
 wed-

wedding—I have frequently proposed the match to my master, who sometimes only gives me a smile, and sometimes replies, when I can forsake all others, then he'll take me. The other day when I ask'd him when he would take me to his bosom? he answered, when I could lay at his feet: and then he also promised to set open his cellar and larder and keep them open. Thus I am removed out of the book of Proverbs into the book of Canticles; but am got no farther than the first chapter, ver. 2. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:" and now I seem to want nothing else but a closer union with the dear Redeemer; but the world at times, diverts my attention from the chief object; but my soul is ever pinning after him, yea, my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. O come quickly. May the Lord daily strengthen your union and communion with the Prince of peace.

yours, &c

JOHN BERRIDGE



